**In Every Voter, A 'Microtarget'**

By Steven Levy, *The Washington Post*  
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…Microtargeting, as its name implies, is a way to identify small but crucial groups of voters who might be won over to a given side, and which messages would do the trick. It's a bit scary because instead of trying to figure out how to direct [advertisements] and mailings to "soccer moms," microtargeters know who you are and try to push your personal hot button so that you'll choose their candidate.

The process involves gathering elaborate information on voters. Alex Lundry, research director of TargetPoint, talks of a "data DNA profile" that can include public items such as party affiliation, Zip code-based assumptions on income level and housing, and fairly detailed consumer preferences such as which car you drive, where you vacation and which entertainment you prefer.

Careful analysis can yield counterintuitive opportunities to win votes. In 2004, Republican microtargeting in New Mexico found a strain of education-obsessed Hispanic moms who responded positively to mailings and phone calls touting George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind law. Democratic microtargeters discovered what they called Christian Conservative Environmentalists. Find such people (by data-mining the information), craft a message that resonates with their particular [beliefs], contact them directly, and you may get votes that otherwise would never have found their way into your tally…